



Character Themes

Heroes of Nature

and Lore

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Developing your character into someone who has a rich story can be a fun and rewarding process. You likely have an idea of what race and what class you want to play, but you might have only a general idea of what your character's life was like before you start playing the character at the gaming table. A theme can help you flesh out your character and provide some interesting options for developing his or her background.

This article discusses how to use character themes in both character creation and the makeup of a party, and it goes on to detail four character themes: the alchemist, the animal master, the order adept, and the wizard's apprentice.

CHARACTER THEMES

Your character's theme is a career, calling, or identity that describes who he or she is in the world. Just as race and class create basic definitions about who your character is, theme adds a third character component to help refine your story and identity. For example, you might be a human wizard who chooses the alchemist theme, but "human alchemist" might mean many different things. You might live in a village and sell useful items to the locals for use in their everyday needs. Perhaps you live in a town among other wizards and want to travel to see more of the world. Or perhaps you roam the forest or swamp, protecting its creatures from external threats with your items because you consider the natural balance of the area to be sacred. Each theme can encompass several unique stories within the same concept.

A theme can embrace characters of different classes. For example, many alchemist characters are wizards, but a rogue with a particular interest in providing his or her own means of disappearing quickly might pick up a few formulas and learn how

to make them. A wizard's apprentice might work with the arcane arts, but he or she doesn't have to be a wizard—a druid with this theme might have started out learning from a wizard and instead decided to follow a different path. A few themes are narrow enough to be limited to certain classes or races—for example, a theme intended for characters who use the arcane power source, or a theme for dwarf characters—but most themes are open to any character.

Choosing a Theme

A character can have only one theme, which you can choose when you create your character. The theme you select grants the benefits described below. You don't have to select a character theme if you don't want to. Also, you can hold off on selecting a theme, but most themes represent your unique background or origin as an adventurer, and they work well for 1st-level adventurers.

Starting Feature: Each theme includes a feature that you gain when you select the theme during character creation.

Additional Features: Most themes offer additional features at levels 5 and 10. You gain an additional feature automatically when you reach the appropriate level—it doesn't replace any of your class features.

Optional Powers: Most of these themes include a number of powers that you add to the ones from which you can choose from your class when you reach the appropriate level. For example, if you're a 6th-level fighter, you can choose a 6th-level fighter utility power or a 6th-level utility power from your theme.

Using Themes to Create Characters

Themes offer a wide array of character creation tools. You might choose a class that is identified strongly with the theme already so that you can reinforce your character's role with the powers that are available. For example, the wizard's apprentice offers theme powers that work well for controller characters, so if you're playing a wizard, the wizard's apprentice theme lets you put a new spin on your role.

You can also use a theme to take your character in a new direction, adopting a story role your class otherwise wouldn't provide. For example, a fighter who chooses the animal master theme can gain some useful striker powers. This sort of combination is a natural tool for building the story of your character: Why would an animal master be a fighter? Is he or she a follower of a deity that defends nature and so he or she chooses to have an animal help achieve specific goals? A warrior who loves to distract his or her opponents in combat by using a creature? Taking a theme that isn't an obvious fit can offer all sorts of interesting story-building possibilities for your character.

Perhaps the best way to think of your character's theme is this: What were you immediately before you became an adventurer? How would you describe yourself to someone else in the game world? Even a class name isn't necessarily an obvious part of a character's identity; after all, if you see a highly skilled sword-wielder in leather armor, that person might be a fighter, a rogue, a ranger, or a paladin. A theme, on the other hand, can be something that is obvious to the character and to everyone else, too. If you create alchemical items,

you're an alchemist. If you're supporting the goals of a specific order, you might be an order adept. In other words, your class is the set of talents you bring to your theme, and your theme is the story behind your class.

Themes in the Party

Think about how your character's theme might interact with the themes that the other players chose. Discuss this with them and the DM in the same way that you might talk about what class or role each person is playing in the party. The following ideas might help to create a story of how your characters come to know one another.

Similar Circles: Some themes can make characters into natural allies—or at least acquaintances—when the campaign starts. For example, the wizard's apprentice and order adept themes can both be used for members of an arcane guild, and such characters might well have known one another before they started adventuring.

Similar Causes: Many character themes can have similar goals—at least at first. The alchemist might decide with the animal master that they need to seek out a rare plant. Though characters with those themes might not know each other before they started adventuring, they often have a similar outlook.

Different Desires: Characters who choose themes with different goals can find common purpose despite their divergent outlooks. These characters can create a bond based on a bargain or an oath to aid one another in their separate quests.

All for One: If more than one player likes the same theme, having multiple characters choose it can be a great deal of fun. Such characters might be old friends, beloved family members, or rivals who have

been thrown together against their will or knowledge. The characters might have worked together as a team before meeting up at the start of the campaign.

If you choose this approach, feel free to adjust the details of a theme's backstory. For example, it likely makes sense for two characters of the order adept theme to come from different orders.

Changing Themes

Your character might discover a different calling at some point in his or her career and wish to change themes. For example, your character might begin a career as a wizard's apprentice, but after a few levels, your group succeeds in overthrowing the evil leader of a group of wizards and warlocks. After your group has dealt with the threat, your character is invited to join an arcane order. You could keep your wizard's apprentice theme, reflecting the start of your adventuring career, or you might choose to take order adept as your new theme as you start learning more about your chosen subject.

If you have no powers or feats that use your theme as a prerequisite, you can retrain your theme choice when you gain a level. If you have a feat or a power that requires your existing theme, you must first retrain those to choices that don't have your theme as a prerequisite. Then you can change your theme by retraining at the next opportunity.

Making Fun Choices

As you roleplay your character's theme, avoid making choices that you think might annoy other players or make them uncomfortable. For example, your character might be a wizard's apprentice who, because of a sheltered upbringing in a small village, believes tieflings to be a wholly evil race. However, if you use that mindset as an excuse to attack your friend's tiefling character, it's not likely to make for a good play session. If everyone else in the group seems okay with a tiefling in their midst, your character is probably perplexed by what it means. Even if your character encountered your friend's tiefling character alone, choosing to watch and follow that tiefling seems a wiser decision than attacking on sight. Then, after you and your friend's character get to know one another, it will make sense that they become allies (if not friends).

Regardless of what makes sense for roleplaying, sometimes it should take a back seat to what would be fun for everyone. When you're confronted with a situation in which you think your character should do something that you know the other characters will not like, think about how those characters' players might react. Sometimes the mischievous, improper, or stupid thing you think your character should do adds to the fun of everyone at the table. Sometimes such an action only makes you the center of attention at the expense of making the game less fun for everyone else. Make sure you know the difference.



ALCHEMIST

Masters of a rare and ancient discipline, alchemists study the properties of mundane and magical elements. They are keen observers of the physical world, and many alchemists have extensive interests in fields of knowledge ranging from astronomy to zoology.

Although many wizards find the study of alchemy rewarding, not all alchemists are wizards. Alchemy does not require the casting of spells or the use of arcane power; the reagents provide all the magic that is necessary to create alchemical effects. Anybody who has a reliable formula, the necessary ingredients, and the specialized knowledge to follow exacting instructions precisely can create alchemical substances and devices. For example, fighters and paladins sometimes study alchemy for its usefulness in siegecraft and military engineering, and rogues find many uses for smoke bombs, lock-eating acids, and sleeping powders.

Experiment and experience are the alchemist's path to understanding, and the vast majority of alchemists maintain a large laboratory stocked with a huge variety of tools and reagents. Alchemical laboratories are expensive, so most alchemists seek out a wealthy sponsor, such as a royal patron, or a civic commission. In some lands, sponsorship of a famous alchemist is a point of great pride, and rival cities or courts seek to entice alchemists of renown to establish workshops in the realm. Alchemists who have no royal patrons support their studies and experiments by producing mixtures that are useful to other artisans, or substances that have military (or criminal) applications. Unsponsored alchemists have less time or fewer resources available for pure

experimentation, but they're also not hampered by meddling or inconvenient requests from the lord or lady holding the purse strings.

Creating an Alchemist

Adventuring alchemists have little opportunity to establish large laboratories or conduct lengthy, involved experiments. However, they have a great advantage over alchemists who are settled in workshops: They frequently encounter rare and unusual materials that more sedentary alchemists have a hard time coming by, so they can create potent mixtures and substances with much smaller samples and simpler processes than alchemists who rely on more mundane materials. Armed with a "traveling workshop"—a large case filled with small samples of useful reagents, portable instruments, and working notes—an adventuring alchemist can prepare almost anything an ordinary alchemist might brew up in a full-sized workshop. Adventuring alchemists naturally keep their eyes open for interesting materials, and they constantly restock their cases with quick scrapings or samples from the things they see as they go about their explorations.

ALCHEMY CASE

Price: 40 gp

Weight: 20 lb.

This sturdy leather valise includes well-packed glassware, a burner, a mortar and pestle, and dozens of jars of common alchemical reagents. You need an alchemy case, or access to an alchemical workshop, to use alchemist powers.

To make use of the optional powers of this theme, you must have an alchemy case.

Starting Feature

The Alchemist feat allows you to create alchemical items such as alchemist's fire, antivenom, smokes-ticks, and thunderstones (all detailed in *Adventurer's Vault*) if you know the necessary formula for the item in question. Having the alchemist theme enables you to create a single use of an alchemical item from materials you currently have on hand. Normally, creating an alchemical item requires costly material components, but you can produce a single item at a time at no cost.

Benefit: You gain the Alchemist feat as a bonus feat. You know the formula for a particular 1st-level alchemical item (such as alchemist's fire). You can use this formula without needing training in any skill associated with it.

At the end of a short rest, you can create one alchemical item of your level or lower at no cost. You must know the formula for the item you create. You can have only one such item prepared at a time.

Alchemist

Through study and experimentation, you have unlocked alchemical secrets and are now equipped to delve into more.

Benefit: You can make alchemical items of your level or lower. You must have the correct formula and training in an appropriate skill.

Special: If you receive the Ritual Caster feat as a class feature, you can take the Alchemist feat instead.

Alchemist's Fire Level 1+ Common

When shattered, this flask fills an area with alchemical flame.

Lvl 1	20 gp	Lvl 16	1,800 gp
Lvl 6	75 gp	Lvl 21	9,000 gp
Lvl 11	350 gp	Lvl 26	45,000 gp

Alchemical Item

Power (Consumable ♦ Fire): Standard Action. Make an attack: Area burst 1 within 10; +4 vs. Reflex; on a hit, deal 1d6 fire damage; on a miss, deal half damage.

Level 6: +9 vs. Reflex, 2d6 fire damage.

Level 11: +14 vs. Reflex, 3d6 fire damage.

Level 16: +19 vs. Reflex, 3d6 fire damage.

Level 21: +24 vs. Reflex, 4d6 fire damage.

Level 26: +29 vs. Reflex, 4d6 fire damage.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Puttering around the workshop and experimenting with interesting reagents has paid off with hard-won knowledge of another alchemical formula.

Benefit: You learn one alchemical formula of your level or lower.

Level 10 Feature

Through experience, you have perfected your alchemical formulas. You can create especially potent mixtures and items.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls with alchemical items you create. Also, you learn one new alchemical formula of your level or lower.

Optional Powers

As you adventure, your repertoire of recipes grows, and you learn better ways to use your formulas. Your travels through the world and your interactions with alchemists and hedge wizards give you access to new reagents, which prove handy when trying to survive encounters with deadly monsters.

Level 2 Utility Power

Aqua regia is the famous “royal water” of alchemy, a potent acid that can dissolve even gold and platinum. You can create a few ounces from your personal supplies to apply to a metal object such as a lock, a door hinge, or an iron bar.

Aqua Regia Alchemist Utility 2

You apply powerful acid to a metal object.

Encounter

Minor Action

Melee 1

Requirement: You must have an alchemy case on your person.

Target: One metal object

Effect: The next creature that attempts a Thievery or Strength check to open, break, bend, or destroy the target before the end of your next turn gains a +5 power bonus to that check.

Level 6 Utility Power

You keep a simple incendiary preparation handy in case you need to slip away from trouble. With a quick flick of the wrist, you can create a thick cloud of smoke to cover your escape.

Alchemist's Escape

Alchemist Utility 6

You cover your retreat with a cloud of thick red smoke.

Encounter ♦ **Zone**

Move Action **Close burst 1**

Requirement: You must have an alchemy case on your person.

Effect: The burst creates a zone that is heavily obscured. It lasts until the end of your next turn. In addition, you can move up to your speed, and this movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from creatures in the zone.

Level 10 Utility Power

So named because many alchemists believe that only goblins could have devised something so diabolical, goblin oil is a slick, colorless lubricant. A small flask tossed onto hard ground creates a patch of extremely slippery terrain, which is ideal for delaying charging foes.

Goblin Oil

Alchemist Utility 10

A flask of alchemical oil makes a patch of floor almost impassable—and it burns nicely, too.

Daily ♦ **Zone**

Standard Action **Area burst 2 within 10 squares**

Requirement: You must have an alchemy case on your person.

Effect: The burst creates a zone of difficult terrain until the end of the encounter. Any creature that enters the zone must succeed on an Acrobatics check against a DC equal to 10 + one-half your level or fall prone. Each creature that falls prone in the zone gains vulnerable 5 fire until the end of its next turn.

ANIMAL MASTER

Gifted with an uncanny ability to befriend and train natural beasts, animal masters are often more at home with animals than with people. Anyone who lacks for humanoid companionship might adopt an animal as a friend and traveling companion, but animal masters aren't just collectors of pets—they're expert trainers and handlers who establish practical partnerships with their animal companions. Animals possess crucial senses and abilities that humans (and other civilized people) lack, and by working closely with a well-trained partner, animal masters gain the benefit of these senses and talents too.

Although some who work with animals train large, ferocious creatures as battle companions, most animal masters work with common animals that are easily domesticated. Their companions are friendly toward or tolerate humans, and they have much more ability to learn complicated tricks and behaviors than truly wild animals do. Heroes interested in keeping panthers, bears, wolves, or other large carnivores to tear their foes to pieces belong in the druid or ranger classes, where they can learn the appropriate powers and acquire dangerous wild beasts to aid them in battle.

Creating an Animal Master

Animal masters include members of most classes. Fighters, paladins, and other warriors find that the keen senses of loyal animals are very useful for avoiding ambushes and keeping watch over camp at night. Other adventurers keep animals for less noble purposes; some rogues train small, clever animals as effective burglars or thieves. However, rangers are the most common animal masters. These individuals are

often loners, and they have a knack for befriendng all sorts of nondangerous animals.

Starting Feature

The internal quality that makes you an animal master is your ability to develop and maintain a rapport with any animal you choose. It's the external manifestation of that ability that those around you see. You are the owner of a highly trained animal minion, a loyal companion and ally that uses its abilities to aid you.

Your animal minion is not an effective combatant by itself. However, you can direct it to leap into the fray briefly—the sudden stab of a beak toward a foe's face or sharp teeth nipping at an enemy's heels can be a helpful distraction when you're closely pressed, and as long as your animal friend doesn't linger after its surprise attack, it can retreat to safety without harm.

Benefit: Choose one of the five animals described below—cat, dog, hawk, monkey, or raven—to be your animal minion. This creature accompanies you for as long as it lives. The animal doesn't have a normal complement of actions, but it can take a move action when you take one. If it has a power, it can use it only on your turn. (With your DM's consent, you can substitute any similar creature for these choices; for example, an otter would be much like a cat with a skill bonus for swimming instead of climbing and jumping, and a badger is pretty close to a small dog in size and abilities.)

In addition, you gain the *distracting attack* power.



Distracting Attack Animal Master Attack

At your command, your animal friend darts forward to bite, rake, or peck at your foe.

Encounter ♦ **Martial**

Minor Action Close burst 5

Requirement: Your animal minion must be within 5 squares of you.

Target: One enemy in the burst

Effect: You gain combat advantage against the target until the end of your turn.

Cat

Quiet and agile, cats are very good at getting into places without being noticed. Yours might be a housecat or a small wildcat, bobcat, or lynx.

Cat Level 1 Minion Skirmisher

Tiny natural beast XP 25

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +6
AC 15, **Fortitude** 10, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11 **Perception** +1
Speed 7 Low-light vision

TRAITS

Cat's Stealth

While within 10 squares of the cat, the cat's master can move up to half his or her speed without incurring the -5 penalty to Stealth checks for moving more than 2 squares.

Skills Athletics +2, Stealth +9

Str 4 (-3) **Dex** 19 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+1)

Con 11 (+0) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 11 (+0)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Dog

Dogs come in a variety of breeds; yours is a mutt of about 25 to 50 pounds, or it might be a jackal, a fox, a coyote, or a wild dog. You can use your dog to follow tracks.

Dog Level 1 Minion Skirmisher

Small natural beast XP 25

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +4
AC 14, **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12 **Perception** +7
Speed 7

TRAITS

On the Track

While within 10 squares of the dog, the dog's master gains a +4 bonus to Perception checks made to find or follow tracks.

Skills Perception +7

Str 8 (-1) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+2)

Con 13 (+1) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 11 (+0)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Hawk

Fast, keen-eyed, and armed with sharp talons, a hawk makes an excellent scout.

Hawk Level 1 Minion Skirmisher

Tiny natural beast XP 25

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +5
AC 15, **Fortitude** 10, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11 **Perception** +6
Speed 4, fly 7 Darkvision

TRAITS

Hawk's Eye

While within 10 squares of the hawk, the hawk's master gains a +4 bonus to Perception checks made to spot creatures.

Skills Perception +6

Str 4 (-3) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)

Con 11 (+0) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 9 (-1)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Monkey

This monkey is a small one of 10 pounds or less, such as a capuchin, a marmoset, or a grivet. Monkeys are excellent climbers and can manipulate objects easily.

Monkey Tiny natural beast	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher XP 25
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +5	
AC 14, Fortitude 11, Reflex 13, Will 11 Perception +0	
Speed 6, climb 6	
TRAITS	
Nimble Fingers	
While within 10 squares of the monkey, the monkey's master can take a standard action to command it to make a Thievery check to pick a pocket as a free action, using the master's Thievery modifier with a +2 bonus.	
Skills Acrobatics +8	
Str 5 (-3)	Dex 17 (+3) Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 4 (-3) Cha 13 (+1)
Alignment unaligned Languages –	

Raven

Highly intelligent birds, ravens can speak in human-like voices (much as parrots do). They are also notorious thieves and have a knack for carrying off small, shiny objects.

Raven Tiny natural beast	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher XP 25
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +6	
AC 15, Fortitude 10, Reflex 14, Will 12 Perception +4	
Speed 4, fly 8	
TRAITS	
Snatch and Scoot	
While within 10 squares of the raven, the raven's master can take a standard action to command it to make a Thievery check to perform sleight of hand as a free action, using the master's Thievery modifier with a +2 bonus.	
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 3 (-4)	Dex 19 (+4) Wis 15 (+2)
Con 10 (+0)	Int 3 (-4) Cha 10 (+0)
Alignment unaligned Languages –	

Animal Minions in Combat

Your animal minion normally stays out of the way in combat, waiting by the outskirts of the fighting. You can direct it to help you by using *distracting attack*. If you're not using your animal minion to harass a foe, you can assume that your pet is safely out of harm's way and won't attract any enemy attention. *Distracting attack* doesn't normally provoke a response against your animal, since it moves in and out of the thick of the fighting quickly.

At the DM's discretion, an animal minion can act independently; for example, if you are incapacitated, your minion might run off to bring help back to you.

Replacing Animal Minions

Until you reach 5th level, if your animal minion is killed, you can replace it after the end of your current adventure or one month, whichever comes first. (See the level 5 feature below.)

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

With a few scraps of food and an hour or two of careful effort, you can befriend a new animal in your vicinity. Most people would require weeks or months to teach the creature the tricks that you can get across in just a few hours.

Benefit: You can find and train a new animal minion at the end of any extended rest. If no suitable creatures are in your vicinity, you have to wait until you find a better spot. You can have only one animal minion at a time.

Level 10 Feature

You have a way with animals; you know when to stand your ground, when to take a knee or reach for some food, and when to back away and give a dangerous creature plenty of space.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Bluff checks, Diplomacy checks, Insight checks, and Intimidate checks made against natural beasts.

Optional Powers

Your bond of friendship with your loyal pet provides you with a supernatural ability to communicate your wishes to it, and to understand what it tells you in return.

Level 2 Utility Power

When your animal minion wouldn't normally perform a specific action, you can cause it to do so. For example, you can direct a cat to drag a potion bottle over to a fallen ally and work the stopper out with its teeth, or instruct a dog to leap up, catch a lever in its jaws, and pull the lever down.

Timely Trick	Animal Master Utility 2
<i>You direct your animal minion to perform a special task.</i>	
At-Will ♦ Primal	
Standard Action	Close burst 10
Target: Your animal minion in the burst	
Effect: Your minion performs a move action and a standard action as you direct. It can accomplish any action it is physically capable of performing (with the DM's consent).	

Level 6 Utility Power

Melee combat might not be the best place for your animal minion, but sometimes your life could depend on its ability to buy you some time. Darting in from the outskirts of the battle, your brave little friend races to your side and stops an enemy from moving in to flank you.

Guard My Back Animal Master Utility 6

Your animal leaps into battle to protect your back.

Encounter ♦ **Primal**

Immediate Reaction **Personal**

Trigger: An enemy enters a square adjacent to you where it flanks you, and your animal minion is adjacent to you.

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses, and enemies do not gain combat advantage for flanking you.

Level 10 Utility Power

Giving your full concentration to your animal minion, you forge a temporary bond linking your spirits together. Where your pet roams, you roam as well, seeing through its eyes and subtly encouraging it to go where you want it to go.

Shared Sight Animal Master Utility 10

You see through your animal minion's eyes.

Encounter ♦ **Primal**

Standard Action **Ranged 1 mile**

Effect: Your animal minion can take a move action and a standard action as you direct, and you share its senses until the end of your next turn. You do not need to have line of sight or line of effect to the animal to use or sustain this power.

Sustain Standard: You share your minion's senses until the end of your next turn, and it can take a move action and a standard action.

ORDER ADEPT

Great wizards are forged, not born. Natural talent and a quick mind are only the bare beginning of being able to wield the arcane arts. Achieving true mastery requires personal dedication and self-discipline, rigorous training, and access to libraries full of ancient grimoires and crumbling scrolls. In many places no special organizations or traditions exist to guide wizards and other arcane spellcasters along their way; magic-users come to their full powers and wield their spells as they see fit. But in other lands, magic is regarded as too important—or too dangerous—to be left in the hands of the self-taught dabblers. In these lands, magic is taught and practiced by members of special orders, guilds, societies, brotherhoods, and cabals who jealously guard access to their powers and seek to control their use.

Arcane orders arise for many reasons. Some exist for the purpose of preserving arcane traditions and instructing new spellcasters in arcane powers. Others organize the efforts of their members in the service of a worthy (or sometimes not so worthy) cause. For example, the Order of the Golden Flame is sworn to serve the crown of Cernall, and its members are granted extensive authority as royal officers. The Ruathar Eldoni is an order of eladrin wizards dedicated to the destruction of demons, its members traveling throughout the world and beyond it to deal with demonic incursions wherever they appear. The Emerald Orb is a meddlesome cabal whose members believe that wizards should rule over lesser mortals, and they work to gain influence over important rulers or to establish open magocracies. Some orders are large, formal hierarchies in which members are expected to obey the orders of their superiors, while



others are small fellowships in which no one member is considered superior to his or her fellows.

An arcane order might operate openly or exist as a hidden society. Members of openly active orders typically proclaim their allegiance with a highly recognizable garment or symbol; for example, wizards of the Golden Flame wear a richly embroidered yellow cloak, and members of the Ruathar Eldoni often wear a silver star-shaped brooch or clasp. Other orders favor such identifiers as tattoos, unique hairstyles or grooming, or implements of a particular design. Members of secret orders avoid any outwardly distinguishing signs, of course, but often have secret signs they can use to prove their identity to others of their group—for instance, a pendant worn under one’s shirt, a ring that isn’t very obvious to a casual viewer, or a brand hidden beneath robes.

Creating an Order Adept

Most order adepts are, of course, wizards or warlocks. Members of both classes rarely appear in the same order, but both have traditions of gathering in secret societies that share a common vision. In addition, many orders include individuals who supplement their studies in arcane magic with other talents. Clerics devoted to gods of magic or battle mages who find that the swords and armor of the fighter are the tools that suit them best can be members in good standing of an arcane order. Sometimes members of other classes begin their careers as aspiring wizards before abandoning their studies. For the rest of their lives they carry the memories (and perhaps disappointments) of their youthful studies, and still find uses for the little bit of arcane magic they did learn before they left or were dismissed.

Starting Feature

Each arcane brotherhood or wizardly order has its own signature battle tactic. In the case of your order, it’s a spell that blisters an area with fiery pellets.

Benefit: You gain the *argent rain* power.

Argent Rain

Order Adept Attack

You bring forth a shower of blue-white molten metal droplets, searing your foes and threatening any creature that ventures into the area.

Encounter ♦ **Arcane, Fire, Implement, Zone**

Standard Action

Area burst 1 within 10 squares

Target: Each creature in the burst

Attack: Highest ability modifier vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d10 + highest ability modifier fire damage.

Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the start of your next turn. Any creature that enters the zone or ends its turn there takes 5 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

Level 11: 10 fire damage.

Level 21: 15 fire damage.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

No longer a novice, you are fully initiated into your order’s membership. You learn the core arcane teachings of your order.

Initiated members are entitled to wear the distinctive emblems, clothing, or marks of the order; for example, robes of a particular color, a large and visible tattoo, or a unique hairstyle or beard. Your emblem or identifying mark, whatever it might be, is widely known in many lands. Allies and adversaries form first impressions of you based on their knowledge of the order you serve.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Arcana checks.

If you have a spellbook, add one 2nd-level wizard utility power to it. If you don’t have a spellbook, you can choose wizard utility powers of a particular level or lower when you gain or retrain utility powers of that level.

Level 10 Feature

You are elevated to your order’s trusted inner circle of wise, experienced masters. As a master, you can speak for your order; your order backs you to the greatest extent possible. You are expected to be careful about taking stands or making promises that are difficult for your order to support, but your order trusts you to know when difficult tasks are necessary.

Many arcane orders are arranged as hierarchies, with adepts of greater seniority and status holding important offices in the organization. High-ranking masters often have the authority to assign missions to lesser members and review their activities. Holding an office gives you significant power to influence your order’s actions, but requires your time and commitment. Many masters choose to avoid these responsibilities and prefer to busy themselves with their own affairs. Whether you agree to take a position in your order’s leadership or remain a free agent is up to you.

In addition to improving your influence and responsibility within your organization, you develop greater mastery of the arcane arts as well. Your knowledge of and experience with wielding magic in battle provides you with a formidable edge in duels of magic; you can blunt enemy spells that attack your mind, avoiding or minimizing their effects.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Will. Your bonus to Arcana checks from this theme increases to +4.

Optional Powers

Arcane orders normally provide their young novices with exhaustive training in magical theory and rituals. You are familiar with a number of so-called metamagic spells—spells that modify how other spells work. With your metamagic spells, you can prolong the duration of a magical effect, strike a target at a great distances, or recall an expended spell to mind at a crucial moment.

Level 2 Utility Power

You weave a spell that helps you sustain multiple powers at once. Staying invisible a little longer or remaining aloft with magical flight might make the difference between life and death.

Extension Order Adept Utility 2

You extend the duration of a spell for just a few more seconds.

Daily ♦ Arcane

Free Action **Personal**

Effect: You sustain a power that normally requires a minor action to sustain.

Special: You can use this power as a minor action to sustain a power that normally requires a move action to sustain.

Level 6 Utility Power

You know a metamagic spell that greatly increases the range of certain spells. Any spellcaster knows that the best way to deal with a threat is from the greatest distance possible, and you are nothing if not practical in such matters.

Far Reaching Order Adept Utility 6

You extend the range of a spell beyond its normal limit.

Encounter ♦ Arcane

Free Action **Personal**

Trigger: You use a ranged or area arcane attack power.

Effect: You double the range of the triggering power. For example, a ranged 5 power becomes a ranged 10 power, and a power with a range of “area burst 2 within 10” becomes area burst 2 within 20. The area affected remains unchanged.

Level 10 Utility Power

This potent spell replenishes your ability to use a spell you have expended, giving you a second use of a spell you could otherwise cast only once per battle. With *mnemonic enhancer*, you need never fear finding yourself in the position of having just used the one spell that you now desperately need.

Mnemonic Enhancer Order Adept Utility 10

You recall to mind a spell you've already used in this battle.

Daily ♦ Arcane

Minor Action **Personal**

Requirement: You must have expended all your arcane encounter attack powers.

Effect: You regain your lowest-level expended arcane encounter attack power.

WIZARD'S APPRENTICE

Apprentices exist in any trade, of course, but none are more famous—or infamous—than wizards' apprentices. Stories tell of foolish apprentices stealing peeks at books that should not be opened, fumbling love charms, or botching transmutations by treating dangerous magic as a clever toy. Other tales recall clever apprentices who come up with just the right spell to save a village while their masters are away, or boldly putting their lessons to good use as they set out in search of adventure. Whether they turn out to be rash or resourceful, wizards' apprentices begin their careers with a priceless advantage: the personal instruction and tutelage of an experienced master.

In exchange for the privilege of learning magic, wizards' apprentices normally spend years engaged in whatever drudgery and chores their masters deem fitting. A typical human wizard's apprentice begins his or her studies around the age of eleven or twelve and remains in the master's household for five or six years. Experienced spellcasters can take on apprentices for a variety of reasons: to share their appreciation of the art, to repay the work of their own masters by instructing a worthy student, or to tutor a young noble. Surprisingly, many of the most reclusive or suspicious—even evil—spellcasters take on apprentices; some regard it as their duty to pass along their learning, some hope to shape talented young mages into future allies (or minions), and others desire an audience to witness the brilliance of their schemes. Evil masters are often callous or exacting, but only the stupidest are actively sadistic toward their apprentices; after all, it's not wise to

share secrets of power with someone you've caused to hate you.

Adventuring wizards' apprentices are usually young adults whose training is more or less complete. They no longer live in their masters' households, and they aren't obligated to wash floors or scrub pots between lessons. Assuming such an individual parted from his or her master on good terms, the apprentice has at least one knowledgeable patron willing to offer advice and assistance in important matters. Many wizards' apprentices retain their loyalty to their masters throughout their lifetimes, even if they surpass their masters' achievements. Apprentices who were taught by particularly powerful or famous masters can serve as agents and allies of those mentors, and they see themselves as the appointed guardians of a long and honored tradition. Just as noble families have ancestral lines going back centuries, many famous spellcasters likewise come from lines of apprentice-master relationships tracing back to famous wizards or sorcerers of old.

Creating a Wizard's Apprentice

Most apprentices are arcane spellcasters—warlocks or wizards. Both classes boast long traditions of passing on knowledge to a single chosen student at a time to ensure that only those who prove themselves competent and responsible are taught the ways of magic. However, many would-be students of the arcane choose not to follow in their masters' footsteps. For example, a young ne'er-do-well might toil over lessons and chores in the home of the town's sorcerer, only to abandon his or her master and take up a career as a rogue who happens to know a fair bit of arcane magic from years of indentured servitude. Wealthy nobles

often arrange tutors for their children, providing the basics of an arcane education even if the youngsters turn to other pursuits when they become adults. Almost anyone might have studied magic before he or she became an adventurer.

Starting Feature

You have mastered a useful attack spell that many wizards' apprentices learn early in their studies. In some wizards' towers, *color orb* is the preferred spell for a very rough game of apprentice tag.

Color Orb Wizard's Apprentice Attack

You throw a brightly shining orb of swirling colors at your foe, momentarily dazing it.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Highest ability modifier vs. Will

Hit: 1d8 + highest ability modifier radiant damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Level 11: 2d8 + highest ability modifier radiant damage.

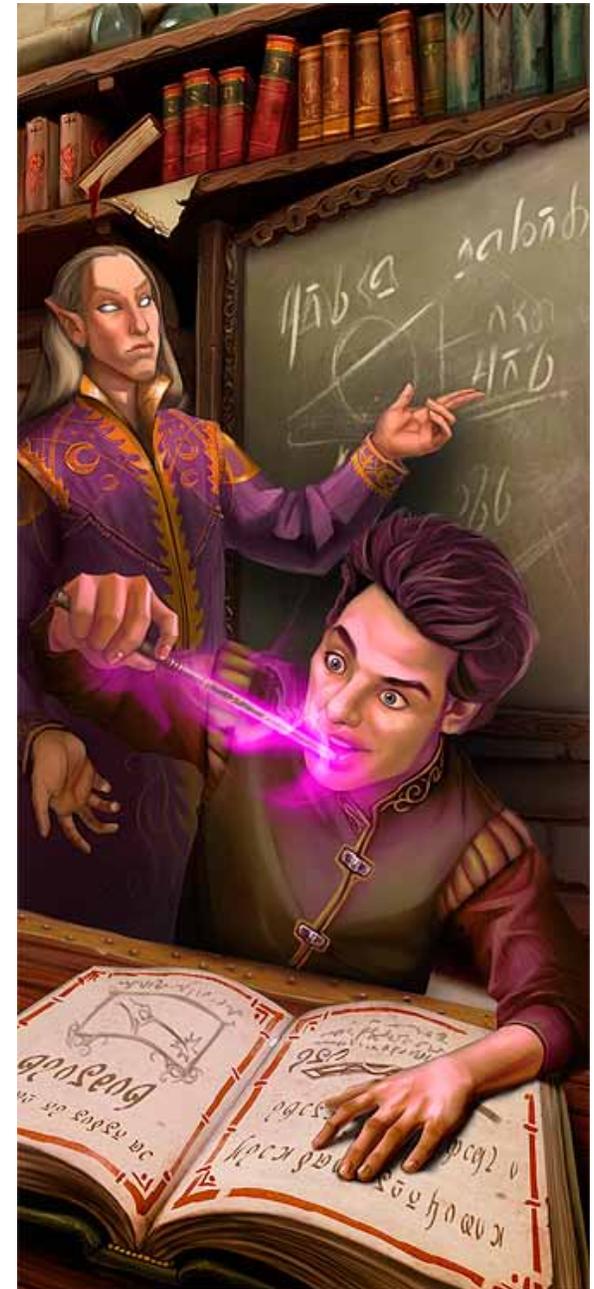
Level 21: 3d8 + highest ability modifier radiant damage.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Stories of your skill and successful adventures reach your master's ears or, if your master is no longer among the living, the ears of one of your master's friends or colleagues. In recognition of your accomplishments, your master (or your master's colleague) sends you a gift to help you along your way.

Benefit: You gain one level 6 or lower common magic implement, armor, or neck slot item of your choice.



Level 10 Feature

After lengthy adventures and much experience, you discover that you now understand arcane theories and cryptic notes you had copied down in the past. Concepts you couldn't grasp before are now clear; the meaning of riddles and problems that used to seem nonsensical are finally revealed.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Arcana checks, and you learn one new language (other than Supernal).

Optional Powers

The workbooks and notes you accumulated as a young apprentice hold the sketchy outlines of several potentially useful spells. Perhaps your master was experimenting with these spells during your time under his or her tutelage, or these might be inspirations of your own with which you began to tinker. Your master might not have thought much of spells that provided a wizard's apprentice with opportunities to shirk work or avoid punishment, but you set them aside for the day when you could choose your own studies.

Level 2 Utility Power

You know a very useful spell of minor invisibility. It doesn't last long, but it can give you the opportunity to duck around a corner or through a doorway before your foes realize where you've gone. It's also a fine way to steal up on an enemy and catch it off guard.

Disappear Wizard's Apprentice Utility 2

You fade from sight for a moment.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Illusion

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You become invisible until the end of this turn.

Level 6 Utility Power

With a whispered word and a single graceful leap, you can soar into the air. You can't stay airborne for long, but there's nothing handier for ascending to a rooftop or getting away from threatening enemies.

Winged Step Wizard's Apprentice Utility 6

You create semisolid wings around your ankles, which bear you up into the air for a single swift leap.

Encounter ♦ Arcane

Move Action Personal

Effect: You fly up to 6 squares and land. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Level 10 Utility Power

You learn a spell of polymorphing (or shapechanging) into a small, harmless animal. You can't fight effectively in this form, but you find it extremely handy for getting into places your own two feet couldn't normally carry you, or spying on enemies who don't realize that you're not what you seem to be. And, as generations of wizards' apprentices can attest, it's fun to turn yourself into something else for a time.

Minor Polymorph Wizard's Apprentice Utility 10

You turn yourself into a small, harmless animal. This form is not terribly useful in a fight, but it might help you avoid one.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Polymorph

Standard Action

Personal

Effect: You assume the form of a Tiny natural beast until the end of your next turn. While in this form, you cannot attack, but you have the senses of your chosen form and gain its movement modes. If your chosen form has the aquatic keyword, you also gain it while in this form. You can return to your normal form as a minor action. If you are flying when you return to your normal form, you descend to the ground without taking falling damage. Observers can tell that you're a supernatural version of your animal form by making a successful Insight check against a DC equal to 15 + one-half your level.

Sustain Minor: Your animal form persists until the end of your next turn.

About the Author

Richard Baker is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and supplements, including *Manual of the Planes*[™], the *DARK SUN*[®] *Campaign Guide*, and the *Gamma World*[®] *Roleplaying Game*. He's a *New York Times* bestselling author of *FORGOTTEN REALMS*[®] novels such as *Condemnation*, the Last Mythal trilogy, and the *Blades of the Moonsea* series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*[®] game at Wizards of the Coast.